

# Transcription 7

---

J: Okay, so, I'd like to start off, just to get an idea of a history of your childhood, as it relates to technology stuff. Take your mind back to when you were growing up and think about the way information technologies played a role in your life, so like computers TV's and cell phones. What was it like?

I: Umb, well I mean I've always liked TV ever since I was little. As young as I can remember, I mean in our household we changed our TV a few times. We used to have this TV that would just turn off, I guess because it was from the 80's because it was an old brand or something. It would just turn off at random times. I remember my sister and I would always watch this one show and you know like during the theme song, it would always turn off at the same exact time.

And then I got a cell phone for my 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduation, because back then it was a big thing to have a cell phone. Now it's like my sister has a cell phone, she got one way before me, but I guess it's like we're advancing the technologies. It's like now younger kids, get cell phones. So yeah that was my first cell phone.

And then umb, laptop, and I got that when I came to school freshman year, college.

J: Did you guys have a family computer growing up?

I: Yeah we had a desktop computer. Umb it was, I don't know, I was like 14. And now it's like really slow, my dad has to go get it fixed and everything, because I guess the memory or whatever is not updated. So like the new Dell computers like that. My mom just got us a new Dell desktop a few months ago.

J: Do you remember the computer being an important thing growing up?

I: Yeah, in grade school not really, I mainly used the computers at school in the computer lab. My dad is the main one who used the computer at home. In high school I started to use the computer a lot more to type papers and do projects and PowerPoints and stuff like that. As I started to grow up it became more pressing—it was always important in the house period, but for me personally it became more important in my late teenage years.

J: You mentioned it [computers] was used it school, did you have classes about computers, or were they used in every class?

I: Oh, yeah, we like had a computer lab and then there was like two or three computers in every classroom. And we did have a class—it was like accelerator [sounds like vi-ro]. We had depending on the classroom we had one day a week you could check out the books and if you needed to use the computer for any copies. So we did like, have a computer in the classroom, just not specifically for learning about computers, but we used it do things.

J: What sorts of things did you learn on the computer?

I: We used to like use games, these typing games, I remember we used to do that to improve our typing. We like—Word and that Paint-

J: MS Paint?

I: Yeah we used to do that too. And then like math games and stuff, online. Chess and...

J: Okay. Cool. So did you grow up in a more rural, suburban, or urban area?

I: Urban.

J: So if you were to think about the surrounding community and the sort of average person in the community, do you think it was a more tech savvy community or less tech savvy community?

I: Umb, you mean the community of our school, or?

J: The surrounding neighborhood and community you grew up in?

I: Oh okay, yeah I would say tech savvy, because I mean I live on the North side and we have hospitals around us and a community college down the street, but I would say tech savvy, yeah.

J: Okay, so fast forward a bit, to college. How did Facebook enter into all of this?

I: Oh wow, okay. So junior, senior year of high school I was on MySpace. It was like the Facebook of High School, it is the Facebook of High School. Umb, I mean the first time I heard about it was when one of my other friends, she was a senior and I was a junior, she was asking me to ask my other friend, cause she knows how to sign up and she was like “can you ask her like how does she do it, because I want to do mine.” And all this and I was like okay, that was the first time I really heard about it. I did my account, but it was like, I just signed up for it and it was so complicated and they have high schools now... right?

J: Well it’s now global now actually, anyone can sign up. But for a while though, you’re right, there was a period when high schoolers could join. You mentioned MySpace, what was that like? How did it compare? How do you remember it being?

I: MySpace is good, it’s still good now. Back then—it used to be Tag actually, and then MySpace was like Sophomore year, I thought it was complicated and first too, a lot of my friends had it, some of my friends did, but a lot of us didn’t. It was a variation kind of, once I signed up for that and got used to it and learned how to use it, it was pretty addictive and the school like blocked all of those type of sites, we always tried to get proxies to get on MySpace, especially in the libraries and stuff, and people always found ways to get on the websites and stuff and everybody wrote it down and we always found a way to get around it.

J: What’d you guys do on MySpace?

I: Put pictures up, comments, um, send messages, yeah those were the main stuff, change you background, background was always important, oh your song, your profile song, changing your headline, like on your page.

J: How does it compare to Facebook, exactly? Was it pretty different or pretty simple?

I: I think they're pretty different actually. Because Facebook you can tell it's a more mature sophisticated look, it's really simple, there's no like extra oh backgrounds and all these colors, it's just like white and blue, and I kind of like Facebook because they have the wall-to-wall and like MySpace doesn't and like people comment you and it's been a while and you don't remember what they said you'll be like "uh..." but at least with Facebook you can go to Wall-to-Wall and read your whole conversation and remind yourself.

I don't know, but when I started using Facebook it was really complicated. Uploading photos, how to do regular stuff on there, everything was so different, I didn't used to get on there until I came down here and I saw that everybody was on Facebook and I was like "Facebook is garbage it's not even all that." Now it's like I think MySpace is garbage, it's so funny, I quickly switched now I don't really get on MySpace, everybody is on Facebook, like everybody. They put events on there.

J: Alright, so what are some of the ways it enters into your everyday life?

I: Oh, when I check my email, it's right there, it's like pretty hard to not think about it, it's pretty addictive. Some people have to delete their account when they have papers and stuff, so they won't even try to get on it, they can't even get on. It's crazy, um, I check it, there are sometimes I try not to check it, if I've got work I have to do, but sometimes you think you have to get on really quick, "I just have to check my messages" and next thing you know you're on it for like 2 hours.

J: Is there a routine to it? Do you check your Facebook every time you check your email?

I: Uh, usually, yeah I usually do check Facebook when I check my email. Sometimes I check my email just to see how much stuff I get to see if I really need to get on, because once you get on it's kind of hard to get off, so you have to—it's kind of a big step, is it really worth getting on for that one message? Or is it okay, I do have a lot of comments, I better see what everyone wrote. So I'll get on, but if it's just one thing I don't have to get on. But usually I have time.

J: Is there any routine to it?

I: No, not—well I go to class and then pretty much I get on the computer so I guess it is.

J: Who are the different communities you interact with on Facebook?

I: A lot of people from here, U of I. My friends from my high school, I'm still on my network from my high school. I have friends from my high school that go to other universities, and I'm on the Chicago network too, it's kind of like a city... mainly like schools though and then like my cousins and people from like home and stuff that I know from a long time ago.

J: Is it mostly younger family?

I: Yeah, yeah, younger family. No uncles yet or anything like that, it would kinda freak me out.

J: Why would it freak you out if an uncle were on Facebook?

I: I wouldn't know what to do. I wouldn't want them- because I'm Nigerian, and the Nigerian community tends to be very communicative, you know, parents, kids, and stuff. So if one of my aunts saw my picture they might text my mom, "oh you know I was just on Facebook" –that's what happened with MySpace, and my mom was like "Oh you do that, you have that? Why did you sign up for that?" They might start conversing about that...

J: So it's a gossip thing that you don't want them to be in on?

I: Yeah.

J: When you haven't been on Facebook in a while do you feel out of touch?

I: Yeah! Kinda, I feel like I'm missing out, because Facebook is pretty much just a gossip magazine, you know, like everything, all your friends, all your minifeeds, stories come up, like [name] and [name] are no longer in a relationship and you're like "what happened?" Everybody's business is on Facebook, some people hate that like, but yeah so I do feel kinda out of touch.

J: If it were ever deleted or gone you'd—

I: Oh my god no!

J: Okay, okay, so then how much time do you spend on Facebook on an average day?

I: Umb, I don't know, maybe, a lot? Maybe like 3 hours a day? Or 2 and a half mostly?

J: What are some of the things you do on Facebook?

I: I check my messages, wall posts, comments--picture comments and stuff like that, I make events for our radio show and stuff. Just to see like people is like "Is there anything going on and stuff? I don't know let's check Facebook." Because people always post events for parties and stuff. Everything, all types of events, banquets, graduations, whatever, you'll find it like, birthday parties, check Facebook for that.

J: So there are events that belong to organizations and stuff as well as social things?

I: Yeah, they usually put it like on the post, it's like who it belongs to.

J: So you make events for your radio show, how does that work? Who do you invite?

I: I just invite all of my friends who could listen, at least try to get them to listen. People I actually talk to, not just strangers, but you know...

J: You mentioned the people you talk to vs. the strangers thing. Some people on Facebook are good friends of yours, some people might be people you don't know well. How do you determine if you'd friend someone, or accept a friend request from someone, on Facebook?

I: Usually if someone adds me, I'll go and check their profile first and check their mutual friends, I'll see like if we have a lot of mutual friends, and I'll just add them. Some people are like my friends I know, I don't even like her, ignore her. I'm not that strict about it, if she doesn't look like a creepo I'll just accept it but usually I have to have friends in common and they have to be living in the Chicago area. Something that we have in common. Not just like from Tennessee like, I'll ignore you, if I just have no idea of who you are and I can't get to know you. But if it's some type of something in common I'll say yes.

J: Okay, so back to the what you do on Facebook stuff. Do you ever post pictures or do videos?

I: Oh, yeah, yeah, I post pictures, usually my friends, my other friends upload pictures and tag stuff. We've done videos for Halloween like Karaoke, and they'll tag us in the step shows, they'll tag us—if they were close by and videotaping. And umb... yeah I have a lot of pictures on there, pictures I take off my phone.

J: Do you use your phone with Facebook often?

I: Oh you mean the Facebook Mobile?

J: Yeah. You ever done that?

I: Nah, I just upload pictures from my phone. It's too much. And now they have Facebook chat. People are kind of mad about that, they think it defeats AIM, it's kind of like okay, too much much.

J: It just came out as I've been doing interviews, so what do you think about it so far?

I: I mean, it's okay I guess it's cool, it's just kind of too much, like now if you want to write on someone's wall you can talk to them if they're online.

J: So instead of writing on their wall you'd talk to them instead?

I: Right, yeah. It's okay, but some people they don't feel like doing that cause they use AIM and stuff. I don't but my friends do, it's kind of like too much, it's like what's the point. There's already too much to do, now you're gonna be on even longer. Cause once you're done checking your messages, you won't get off.

J: You ever use the status thing up at the top of your page?

I: Yeah.

J: How do people use that?

I: I mean, some people they just put like “Is studying” or “Is tired” I try to put creative stuff, like I don’t know, I’d have to think of something. I put like how I’m feeling or something, but it’s not gonna be pretty plain, like if I can’t think of anything good to put I’ll put nothing at all.

J: Do you ever communicate with it? Like say “I’m going out at 8:00, meet me – somewhere.”?

I: Oh, no, I actually don’t do that, but I know a lot of people that do. I don’t really do that though, I don’t know...

J: Do you ever use applications?

I: Yeah, I have a lot of applications. I just added, because my friends forward it to me and they look interesting. I have like the top friends and the movies... the movie things...

J: Is it like rating movies?

I: yeah, horoscopes and stuff like that, fun wall and all that.

J: Okay. What are some of the groups you’re part of? How do you go about participating in them?

I: I have a lot of groups on my page. People will invite me if I know them, or if I support it, I’ll just join it, so I can show on my page. I don’t really participate in anything—they send messages and stuff but I usually just delete it.

J: is it like spam or anything?

I: Yeah, kinda, just like junk.

J: Do you tend to accumulate groups and then forget about them and they become a history of you, or do you specifically group prune and get rid of ones you aren’t in or interested in?

I: Well I just kind of join the groups and I have kind of a long list, and I just leave it there. Sometimes I look to see which groups – I need numbers, and if it’s dumb I’ll leave the group, but usually I don’t do that much.

J: Okay, so moving onwards. We’ve talked about what you do on Facebook, but I’m also interested in what you learn on Facebook. Not like today in math class we learned long division, I’m talking more like information-wise, what you learn about people.

I: You mean like our friends?

J: Yeah, from your friends, what’s going on in life, that sort of stuff.

I: I learn like a lot of things, I learn events they go to, based on pictures I’m seeing, like “Oh they want to that party” or they went home that weekend. I read other people’s wall-to-wall sometimes just to see like their relationship. You can kind of tell like how close friends are, based on their wall-to-wall and stuff. It’s kind of obvious. I learn who’s really good friends with who based on their top friends and stuff.

I learn peoples' heritage—they have this application called “My heritage” that says “I’m from these countries, but I’m born here.” So I learn like that, I learn what people’s birthdays are, what their home towns are, their religious views.

J: So a lot?

I: yeah a lot!

J: So do you think it’s more comparable to being in a place like a city or more like reading a newspaper? Or neither?

I: Newspaper like gossip?

J: Sure, a social newspaper almost.

I: Yeah, like that. It would be kind of an online newspaper.

J: When you log on are you more active or passive – when you log on are you looking for a specific information or to do a certain thing, or do you log on and just explore around more often?

I: I go from thing to thing most of the time. There are a few times I go on if I need to read something or need to make an event. But sometimes I end up getting side-tracked and messaging and writing on people’s walls and end up making the event last. But for the most part it’s just random.

J: Have you ever noticed—when a person gets into a school, college, they can then join that network. And when they join that network it becomes official that they’re going to that school. Are there any other things you notice that become official once on Facebook?

I: yeah, like under the interests – when they put things they’re part of, like for example I’m part of the African-Cultural Association, and I have that on my Facebook, and people read that and are like “oh she’s part of the ACA” and it’s pretty official. Like people’s names. People change their names a lot. I don’t know if that’s official, but it could be like their nickname, people that put like the first initial of their last name because they don’t want their name showing.

J: Alright, so another issue. There’s this idea of stalking vs. browsing. There are some things you can do on Facebook that might be considered creepy, and other things that might be considered normal. And there’s a lot in between. How do you figure out what’s creepy on Facebook and what’s not creepy?

I: Umb, like what would be creepy is like when random people message me, like “hi I just saw your page and I thought you were cute and this and that and wanted to add you.” I mean that’s kind of creepy, especially if—it’s kind of hard to explain—it’s just like not my type or I don’t know you, it’s just like I don’t know you why are you messaging me? And there’s like the honesty box, it’s pretty intense, get a lot of crazy messages from girls and guys – you don’t know who it is they just message you saying stuff. Not really stalkerish or anything, just weird, awkward. You know, stuff like that.

J: So what would be the difference between something being just creepy vs. something stalkerish?

I: Well a stalkerish move might be like—if somebody wrote on your honesty box “I’m gonna try to come visit you” I know where you live and tried to threaten you—“I know you did this to my friend and all this so just watch your back.” That would be kinda like okay I’m kinda scared now, because I don’t know who this is, I don’t know if they’re playing. And then something that might be kind of creepy could just be like—messaging, at least that way you know who it is so you can choose not to respond, so yeah, just like messaging randomly, people if you don’t want to get to know them.

J: Okay. Sometimes you might be looking at a friend’s profile and notice something – like say they like soccer, and then later you might run into them later and you might invite them to play soccer, but you only invited them to it because you learned it online, but you don’t mention you learned it on Facebook. Is that sort of thing a common thing on Facebook?

I: It’s a little bit common. Like most of the time my friends and people I’m kind of new and getting to know, I start talking to them on Facebook—if I keep seeing them here and there and one of us adds the other, then it’s not a big deal.

J: What if it was someone you liked romantically – you might look them up to see if they’re single, but you’d never want to ask them in person, does that happen?

I: Yeah, stuff like that, I would just keep that to myself, I would just make that a mental note. Now I would know how to approach them. So it’s kind of like, I know what they’re whole status, now I don’t have to ask them, now I know how to approach them, rather than if Facebook didn’t exist I’d be too scared to ask them, I’d be kinda shy.

J: So on that note, you could look at that information and know things without them knowing you know. A lot of the time people can look at your profile but you may not know who they are. They might leave a message, but you don’t know what they were looking at or how long they were there. So you always have some sort of an invisible audience. If you were to guess who your invisible audience is, who would they be?

I: Probably like just like people—obviously my close friends. We go on each other’s page all of the time. And then friends I’m not really close to, but people I talk to on a, you know, a decent basis, and then probably just like people I’d probably never think about, just like distant people who are like my friends and I might talk to once in a while, but people who I don’t associate with everyday but they happen to be on Facebook.

J: Okay, so I think we’re out of time. Thank you!